

## HOME MISSION WORK.

[Read at California Conference by T. Gibson.]

I appreciate the privilege of participating in this Conference of the Brethren church of California, and the opportunity of testifying to the value and usefulness of this work that has been undertaken by the board of home mission. Oh, how much interest in this subject of home missionary effort we should take, since it is a fact that true missionary work is the life of all church work. The church that has no missionary work has no life. The life of the church depends on the conversion or the christianizing of the masses.

The life of Jesus is a strong argument in favor of missionary work. If we follow him in his labors of love for God and humanity,—not always at home, but in distant fields,—our sympathy with this great work will be quickened, and be stimulated with a deeper sense of duty, and consequently we will be moved to a greater activity in this Christian endeavor. Jesus was a great Missionary. He gave all his time and life to the noble cause. Oh, let us drink in the Spirit of Jesus! And this year let our cry be, go or send—go or send the Gospel to the heathen. That don't mean to some benighted nation.

God bless them who have made great sacrifices to go and toil in distant frontiers, and have given up all the comforts of civilization to carry the "glad tidings of great joy" to them who are sitting in spiritual-darkness. Just as I recall to memory, the great sacrifice made by that gallant heroine, that brave little woman from Los Angeles, who gave up home and all that was dear to her, and went to live in that dreadful Leper Island, Molaki, where no one else would go since the death of that faithful, devoted Roman Catholic priest. Think of this dear little woman, and then ask yourself the question, Have I imbibed the Spirit of Jesus? Think of the fact that, after a while, this dear little woman—I cannot recall her name, some of you may remember—by administering to the wants of these wretched creatures, will become stricken with this dreadful incurable malady which is a true type of sin; and after years of indescribable misery, will be doomed to see herself die piecemeal assured that no human power can stop or arrest it. When I think of such sacrifice, I feel very insignificant, and feel like crawling into a hole.

Let us return to where we left off (go or send the Gospel to the heathen.) I said this don't necessarily imply some benighted nation. Right here in California heathens are very numerous. A heathen

is an idolator, and that means excessive attachment to anything. Many of our highly civilized and enlightened people are heathens from the fact that they love excessively the "unrighteous manna." The New Testament definition of idolatry is, according to Paul, "Covetousness," and he warns the Christian to "beware of it." Missionary work was never more needed in distant fields than it is now in California. There is so much evil influence that pervades almost every community, that the words of Jesus are very applicable in this day and age: "The harvest is great, but the labors are few. Is there any one of us so utterly devoid of the love of God, and the sympathetic feelings of Jesus that we will refuse to give liberally of our means to keep an energetic, spiritual minded man employed all the year, preaching and spreading the Gospel in its primitive purity?

Oh, the mountain of responsibility that is resting upon us who belong to the Brethren church! God has entrusted our people with the unadulterated Gospel, and in view of the fact that you cannot find any other Christian organization that preaches the word without mixture, how can we remain unmoved or unaffected when we have been so highly favored of heaven, and when our gracious Heavenly Father has been constrained to appeal to us, and depends upon us to spread the joyful tidings. Why shouldn't we deny ourselves and make some sacrifice to have the pure Gospel preached at the very least all over California? I don't believe in confining the Gospel, as our people teach it, to such places as we have organizations. Remember the words of Jesus "A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country." It has always seemed to me that our ministerial brethren were afraid to hold meetings outside of the brotherhood. They are altogether too limited in the breaking and distributing of the "bread of life."

This reminds me of a sermon that one of our beloved brethren preached, from the beautiful text "Launch out into the deep."

Let us learn a lesson from the miracle of the loaves and fishes. As long as they were being distributed among the people, they continued to grow or increase, but just as soon as they discontinued to distribute, the loaves and fishes ceased to multiply.

What lesson may we learn from this miraculous manifestation of God's power. As long as we distribute the "bread and water of life," "it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." But just as soon as we impart to others,

the flowing or springing up will cease. "The just shall live by faith." "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days." Sometimes we make our boast of not being under the law, but are under grace; and that we are not saved by the works of the law, but that we are justified by faith. Let us see how much of the saving faith we have exercised in God. I claim that the seed of Abraham that lived in the Mosaic dispensation had a great deal more faith than many of us have. "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of thy increase." Prov. 3:9. This is what the Jews did.

Now let us measure ourselves. Are we honoring the Lord with our substance. When we are asked to give to the church, the missionary society, the hospital, the poor. Do we always remember and fully realize that this is God's way of sending his servants to get his share of the fruits? How much of our increase do we consecrate to the Lord?

Again, let us measure ourselves with the people that lived under the law: "All the tithe of the land whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord." Herd and flock, "The tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." Lev. 27:30-32.

How many of us consecrate the tenth of our increase? Talk about living by faith, and casting our bread upon the waters! A good deal of our faith is sight and not faith at all. Some try to justify themselves by saying that there is no command for this in the New Testament, and therefore, it is not binding. Oh, what a lame excuse for refusing to support the Lord's work! Oh, Brethren, let it never be said of us when we come up in the judgment that the people who lived under the law contributed more liberally to the work of the Lord, than those who lived under grace and by faith. I am afraid that some of us will be condemned when we will be confronted by the Jew in the judgment. I think of the words of Jesus when he told the people that one generation would rise in judgement and condemn the other.

Brethren, let us consecrate our means to the Lord, and concentrate our efforts in laboring for the salvation of the unsaved. And the Lord will make us prosper both in temporal and spiritual blessings.

To patiently suffer wrong at the hands of others can but cause the heart to ache; but to do wrong in retaliation for wrong received causes the soul to suffer.—*Religious Telescope*.